PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Mr. Berna:

The following is a proposed amendment for claims 3-11 and 16-18. A decision on the patentability of claims 12-15 cannot be made until drawings are submitted depicting the subject matter thereof. However, after reading the specification sections outlined in page 4 (OA issue #1) in your response, there may not be adequate disclosure for adding these drawings to the application. Since the specification does not appear to clearly disclose what is being claimed in claims 12-15, it is unclear how these features can be added to the drawings without the incorporation of new matter. The best way to expedite prosecution of this application would be to cancel claims 12-15, and then pursue these features in a continuation-in-part application, if desired. However, if you would rather attempt to amend the claims/drawings in an effort to allow claims 12-15 in the present application, I can prepare a final rejection of claims 12-15 in their present state, and you can respond accordingly with amendments to the claims and drawings. If you have any questions, please call me at (703) 308-1859.

Examiner David Bryant

3. (Six Times Amended) The device of claim 2 wherein [in which] said substantially elastic buffer includes [comprises] a ring portion at an end of said buffer opposite said contact face, and said buffer [which is covering part of said arm to which it] is secured to said at least one arm by

inserting said at least one arm into said ring portion such that said ring portion encircles said at least one arm.

4. (Seven Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2 further comprising [wherein to said two arms are added] two additional [other] movable arms, each additional arm having a transverse hole therethrough, and said arms being mounted on the support part with the support part being disposed within the transverse holes of the additional arms, and wherein the two first arms and the two additional arms along the support part are each provided with a respective said [substantially] elastic [buffers] buffer, and wherein the [which are both turned by their] contact face of the elastic buffer of each of the two first arms face towards a first [the same] direction, and the contact face of the elastic buffer of each of the two additional [other] arms face [being provided with substantially elastic buffers which are both turned by their contact face] towards a second direction opposite the first [other] direction.

5. (Seven Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 4, [wherein] further comprising, in addition to said four arms, a fifth and a sixth [is added one pair of successive] movable [arms] arm positioned adjacent each other along said support part so that said device could be used as a vertical helping hand, said fifth and sixth [these last] arms each being provided with a respective said [substantially] elastic buffer, and wherein the contact faces of the elastic buffers of the fifth and sixth arms [buffers which are turned by their contact] face [oppositely] in opposite directions.

6. (Six Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, [wherein] further comprising, in addition to said two arms, [are added successively] two pairs of movable arms disposed in succession along said support part so that said device could be used as a horizontal helping hand, the [those] pairs of movable arms being [furthermore turnable] rotatable around said support part in [into] at least two directions, and each of said two arms and said movable arms having one said [substantially] elastic buffer secured thereto at a distance from said support part, and wherein the arms of each of said pairs of movable arms can be positioned so that the contact face of the buffer of one [any] arm [for each of said two pairs could have its contact face facing] faces the contact face of the buffer of the other arm of the same pair.

7. (Five Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, [wherein] further comprising a removable stop fitted onto at least one end of said support part, said [is fitted out with a] removable stop comprising [which is made of] a section of tubular supple sheath which frictionally engages with the outer surface of [and slipped onto] said support part [by a gentle forcing].

8. (Four Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, [wherein the support part has secured thereto] further comprising a coupler secured to the support part, said coupler supporting [which supports] another support part such that said another support part extends in a [at least one] direction distinct from that of the first said support part, said another support part including [carrying] at least one movable arm provided with a said [at least one substantially] elastic buffer.

9. (Six Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, [wherein the support part has secured thereto] further comprising a coupler secured to the support part, said coupler holding [which holds] other support parts parallel to the first [said] support part, each of said other support parts carrying at least two arms, of which at least one is movable, and of which one is provided with one said [substantially] elastic buffer.

10. (Five Times Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, [wherein the support part has secured thereto] further comprising a coupler secured to the support part, said coupler holding [which holds] another support part in a [one] direction distinct from that of the first [said] support part, said another support part including a second coupler and [carrying] at least one movable arm provided with [a] one said [substantially] elastic buffer [and another coupler].

11. (Twice Amended) The [A] device according to claim 2, wherein the support part is made of several beams which [with] are connected end to end in a row by couplers, each of the outermost beams supporting at least one of said two arms.

12. (Three Times Amended) A device according to claim 2, wherein the support part is made of several parallel beams which are distributed so that no said substantially elastic buffer could be aligned with any two of those beams.

13. (Three Times Amended) A device according to claim 12, wherein said substantially elastic buffer is split up into several pieces so that no one of said pieces could be aligned with any two of those beams.

14. (Three Times Amended) A device according to claim 13, wherein the arm upon which is secured said substantially elastic buffer is itself split up into several blocks each carried by one or several of said beams.

15. (Three Times Amended) A device according to claim 2, wherein the connection between the support part and each of those of said arms which are movable along said support part is made of a sliding holder.

In claim 16, line 21, insert --a-- after "against".

17. (Twice Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein said support part has secured thereto a coupler which supports another support part, said another support part carrying at least one movable arm, said at least one movable arm having a said [substantially] elastic buffer secured thereto at a distance from the another support part and a transverse hole through which said another support part is fitted [carrying said at least one movable arm, said buffer having under its contact face, which is approximately at a right angle to said support part, a thickness large enough so that said buffer could act as a compression spring], said method [for holding objects by clamping without any risk at all of damaging,] further comprising the steps of:

[d)] applying each [every said substantially] elastic buffer of the at least one movable arm supported on said another support part against a respective [some resistant] surface of said object,

[e)] manually exerting pressure on the back of said at least one movable arm supported on said another support part [arms a manual thrust], and

[f)] stopping the exertion of pressure when said at least one movable arm supported on said another support part is tilted with respect to said another [this thrust so as to lock each of those movable arms by tilting against their own] support part, such that a frictional force is created between said another support part and an interior surface of the transverse hole of said at least one movable arm secured thereto, thereby locking said at least one movable arm in place with respect to said another support part.

18. (Twice Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein said support part has secured thereto a coupler which supports another support part, said another support part carrying at least one movable arm and another coupler, said at least one movable arm having a said [substantially] elastic buffer secured thereto at a distance from the another support part and a transverse hole through which said another support part is fitted [carrying said at least one movable arm, said buffer having under its contact face, which is approximately at a right angle to said support part, a thickness large enough so that said buffer could act as a compression spring,] said method [for holding objects by clamping without any risk at all of damaging,] further comprising the steps of:

[d)] applying each [every said substantially] elastic buffer of the at least one movable arm supported on said another support part against a respective [some resistant] surface of said object,

[e)] manually exerting pressure on the back of said at least one movable arm supported on said another support part [arms a manual thrust], and

[f)] stopping the exertion of pressure when said at least one movable arm supported on said another support part is tilted with respect to said another [this thrust so as to lock each of those movable arms by tilting against their own] support part, such that a frictional force is created between said another support part and an interior surface of the transverse hole of said at least one movable arm secured thereto, thereby locking said at least one movable arm in place with respect to said another support part.